customs duty and higher cost of indigenous materials push up the cost of production. Even then, however, photovoltaic cells are already economical compared to conventional power for several applications in areas at a distance from the transmission network. The Department of Non-Conventional Energy Sources is supporting efforts aimed at bringing down the costs, such as improvement in technology, increase in market size, improving systems design, etc. Special emphasis is also being placed on the development of newer technologies. A major technology development project relating to amorphous silicon solar cells is being implemented in the Seventh Plan which includes the establishment of a Pilot Plant.

Village level energy programme

3328. SHRI SURENDRA SINGH THAKUR: Will the Minister of ENERGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have launched village level energy programme in the Seventh Plan;

(b) if so, what are the details thereof;

(c) what are the achievements of Government during Sixth and Seventh Plan period under this programme;

(d) how many villages have so far been covered State-wise under this programme in the country; and

(e) whether Government would consider to speed up the programme in view of the energy needs of the villages?

THE MINISTER OF ENERGY (SHRI VASANT SATHE): (a) and (b) The Department of Non-Conventional Energy Sources has initiated a demonstration village level energy programme called "Urjagram Programme" in the Seventh plan. Under this programme urjagram projects which are based on a combination of various-non conventional energy devices and systems are taken up in suitable villages identified through energy surveys.

(c) and (d) 67 urjagram projects have so far been completed in 10 States/Union Territories, as follows:

1.	Andhra Pradesh . .	3
2.	Bihar	1
3.	Gujarat	9
4.	Madhya Pradesh . .	6
5.	Maharashtra . . .	10
6.	Orissa	6
7.	Tamil Nadu . . .	2
8.	Tripura . . .	2
9.	Uttar Pradesh . .	22
10.	Delhi	6

151 projects are under implementation, and several more are planned.

(e) Initially it is proposed to establish one such demonstration urjagram project in each Parliamentary constituency. Further expansion and acceleration of the programme will depend upon the availability of adequate financial resources.

Progress in the execution of hydel projects

3329. SHRI JAGADISH JANI: Will the Minister of ENERGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the execution of some hydel projects like Indravati and upper Kolab are behind schedule;

(b) if so, the reasons for the delay; and

(c) what are the details of progress made in the completion of those projects?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF POWER IN THE MINISTRY OF ENERGY (SHRI KALPNATH RAI): (a) Yes, Sir, the execution of some hydroelectric projects like Upper Indravati and Upper Kolab are behind schedule.

(b) The main reasons affecting the execution of hydroelectric projects include delays in environment and forest clearance placement of orders, supply of equipment, changes in scope of works, delay in acquisition of land, and in execution of civil works and, at times, resource constraints.

(c) The excavation and masonary/concreting works of the dams at the Upper Indravati Projects are in progress. Excavation of the link channel and concreting of power house are also in progress

Two units of the Upper Kolab (Stage-I) Project have already commissioned. All civil works except lining of pressure shaft and erection of pen stock, for the third unit, have been completed. Generator barrel concreting for this unit is in progress.

Solar power station at Village Mathania in Jodhpur

3330. SHRI B. L. PANWAR: Will the Minister of ENERGY be pleased to state:

(a) when Government propose to commence the work for the construction of Solar Power Station at village Mathania in Jodhpur district of Rajasthan for which announcement has been made ;

(b) what is the anticipated cost of this Solar Power Station;

(c) by when this Solar Power Station will start supplying solar energy; and

(d) whether this project will be undertaken keeping in view future possibility of expansion in view of the availability of maximum solar energy in that area?

THE MINISTER OF ENERGY (SHRI VASANT SATHE): (a) to (d) The project report for installing the Solar Thermal Power plant near Jodhpur in Rajasthan has been sent to Planning Commission for clearance. No decision has yet been taken. The anticipated initial cost of the power plant is around Rs. 100 crores, but there will be no recurring fuel cost. The power station could start supplying power within two years after the start of construction following clearance of the project. The project can be expanded by adding more capacity of Solar Power at the same site later as needed.

Clearance of Guru Nanak Dev Thermal Power Plant

3331. SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL: Will the Minister of ENERGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Guru Nanak Dev Thermal Plant (GNDTP) Stage-III has been techno-economically cleared by the Central Electricity Authority and the Punjab Pollution Control Board; and

(b) if so, what further action has been taken in the matter so far and by when the work is likely to start?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF POWER IN THE MINISTRY OF ENERGY (SHRI KALPNATH RAI): (a) and (b) The proposal in respect of the Guru Nanak Dev Thermal Plant (GNDTP) Stage-III (2x210 MW) was techno-economically cleared by the Central Electricity Authority (CEA) in May, 1985. Recently the Punjab State Electricity Board (PSEB) have intimated that the State Pollution Control Board have conveyed their 'No Objection' subject to the setting up of these units near village Behman, Dewana at a distance of about 9.0 Kms from the existing Guru Nanak Dev Thermal Station.

THE CEA have advised the PSEB to forward a revised project feasibility report based on the new site. Work on the project could start after it is techno-economically cleard by the CEA and investment approval is accorded.

Withdrawal of levy on cement

3332. SHRI SATYA PRAKASH MALAVIYA: Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal under consideration of Government for withdrawal of levy on cement and if so, what are the details thereof; and

(b) whether Government have received complaints that cement factories in Andhra